†**نیتا سدن "شری سکندر بخت":** سر۔ سب سے پہلے تو میں اس ھاؤس سے اس بات کی معافی چاہتا ہوں کہ ھاؤس کو ۱۵ منٹ کے لئے ایڈجرن کرنا پڑا کیونکہ ہمارا کوئی کیبنیٹ منسٹر یہاں پر نہیں تھا۔ میں شما چاہتا ہوں۔ اور امید کرتا ہوں کی اس قسم کی غلطی آئندہ نہیں ہوگی۔ دوسرا۔ چیئر مین صاحب، میں وہ موو کرنا چاہتا ہوں کہ پرائیویٹ ممبر بزنس آج کے لئے سسپینڈ کر دیا جائے اور جس مسئلے پر بحث چل رہی ہے، وہ بحث جاری رہے۔ ہماری اپنے باقی سب ساتھیوں سے بات چیت ہوگئی ہے۔میں امید کرتا ہوں کہ آپ کی اجازت سے ھاؤس اس کو منظور کریگا۔

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the proposal agreed to?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, today's Private Members' Business is suspended. Now, Shri George Fernandes. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to make one submission. We were told that the Defence Minister will make a statement on the nuclear explosion made by pakistan. Sir, the hon. Minister of Defence will kindly agree with me that this is not a defence issue, the explosion of atomic devices by Pakistan is not a defence issue. This is an international issue. It involves India's position, it involves South Asia's position and it involves our foreign policy. Therefore, in the fitness of things, I will implore upon you that this statement may kindly be made by the hon. Prime Minister. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MD. SALIM (West Bengal): Sir, this is not a defence issue. This is a diplomatic issue. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA (Bihar): Sir, the Prime Minister is also the Foreign Affairs Minister. I support Shri Gurudas Das Gupta's proposal that let the Prime Minister come and make a statement.

श्री सिकन्दर बख्त : सदर साहब, मेरी गुजारिश यह है कि ...(**व्यवधान**)... पहली बात तो यह है कि मुझे इससे इत्तेफाक नहीं है कि यह डिफेंस मिनिस्टर का सबजेक्ट नहीं है। ऐज ए केस जो कुछ वहां हुआ है, रिऐक्शन डिफेंस मिनिस्टर से ही आना चाहिए लेकिन अगर हाउस चाहता है कि प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहब भी इसमें कुछ बोले तो पांच बजे प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहब यहां बयान देने वाले हैं, उस मसले के सिलसिले में जिस मसले पर दो रोज से बहस हो रही है, अगर इसके बारे में भी दो लफ्ज कहेंगे तो मैं उनसे गुजारिस करुंगा कि वह इसको पूरा कर लें। इस वक्त मेहरबानी से इनकी बात करने दी जाए।

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Sir, is it in continuation of the earlier Statement? ...*(Interruptions)*... Is this statement in continuation of the earlier Statement?

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Let the Prime Minister come and make a statement on yesterday's developments in Pakistan. ...*(Interruptions)*... Thereafter, if the Defence Minister wants to make a statement, he is welcome to do it, not before that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have considered the hon. Members' views. I request Mr. George Fernandes to make a statement.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER
Pakistan's Nuclear Tests

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Sir, with your permission I want to make a statement.

Indian seismic observation centres have recorded at 1546 Hrs. on 28th May, 1998 the event of an underground nuclear explosion in Pakistan's Chagai Hills zone. Observations recorded at multiple centres indicate a likely yield of about 10 kiloton TNT equivalent. It there were more tests than one, then the tests were simultaneous and the successive tests

†[ ] Transliteration in Arabic Script.

were of a smaller yield than the first one. Our Government had anticipated such an event and this was already factored into the planning of our defence strategy. It is, however, unfortunate that Pakistan has chosen to declare the test 'INDIA specific'.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. B.B. Dutta.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, it was agreed that after the Statement on Pakistan's Nuclear Test by the hon. Defence Minsiter, the Leader of the Opposition would intervene I just want to keep you informed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. All right.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSTION (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I listened carefully to the hon. Defence Minister's Statement. Pakistan's nuclear tests are as expected as they are regrettable. This indeed, is a grave development. We appear to be poised on the edge of a nuclear arms race which, I think, even now every effort should be made to avoid.

Sir, for quite sortie time, it has been known that both India and Pakistan were nuclear capable States and the challenge for both our countries is to ensure that this- capability does not translate itself into an *uncontrollable* unclear arms race. We must not lose sight of the fact that the biggest enemy of both India and Pakistan is our chronic poverty, ignorance and disease which still afflict millions and millions of people in both our countries.

Sir. our Party stands with the nation united and determined to safeguard our country's independence, security and sovereignty, and I urge upon the Government to deal with the emergent scenario with the greatest sense of responsibility, maturity and restraint. The BJP Government, the way it has gone about the business of explaining the nuclear tests, has given proof of its rather low ability to manage the domestic and international fall- out. Needless euphoria has been sought to be created that we are overnight a great power. We call upon this Government to conduct its affairs with a greater degree of restraint and sobriety that the occasion demands. In particular, Sir, the Government should cease to talk in more words than one voice and not send different and confusing signals on the issue to confuse the public. The most important task at this moment is to defuse tension and in this context the offer of dialogue by the prime Minister of Pakistan, if true, should be responded to in a positive manner. As I said earlier, we should not forget the utmost need of the hour is utmost restriant and sobriety. Therefore, we should not indulge in words and actions which can escalate the already tense situation. Domestically every effort should be made to see that peace and tranquility are maintained in our country. As I said yesterday, some of the frontal organisations of the BJP have been using words which can cause, I think, grave damage to the sense of unity and cohesiveness which our nation needs at this critical juncture. I sincerely hope that the Government and the Home Minister would take appropriate action to see that the nation's cohesion, unity and communal haramony are maintained and nothing is done to disturb them. As my colleagues and I mentioned yesterday, on certain issues we should keep away partisan interests and give the national interest overwhelming priority. But it is the responsibility of the Government to show us the way. They have landed us in this problem and they must, therefore, help to defuse the crisis and unite the country through a programme of action which this country as a whole can support and endorse. As the Prime Minister mentioned in his statement yesterday, we should seriously engage in a dialogue with leaders of the international community and apprise them of our deep-rooted commitment to disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, with the ultimate objective of elimination of nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that we have conducted underground nuclear tests, the Prime Minister should reiterate and reassure the international community of our abiding faith in Rajiv Gandhi's action plan for a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world order and of our commitment to work hard to achieve these objectives.

Mr. Chairman, we should maintain utmost restraint in our utterances towards China and Pakistan in particular. It is easy to break relationships, but it takes a long time to build them up. Whatever has been built assiduously over the decades should not be destroyed by an unguarded utterance or by an irresponsible statement. Unless the ruling coalition visibly demonstrates that national interest alone, not any partisan interest, is going to determine the next course of action, it would not be possible for the people to identify themselves with the cause they have esponsed. I reiterate once again our commitment • to work together with other sections of the House and the country to protect our national interest. But at the same time, it would be my earnest appeal to all that let us not create an atmosphere of needless hysteria and jingoism. Let us keep our cool and let us show our mettle in the difficult situation that this country faces today. Thank you.